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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



[The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this Department.]

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### TWO QUESTIONS

DEAR EDITOR: May I ask two questions through the pages of the JOURNAL? *First.* How much of proteids yields 4.1 calories? The reference is to the first article on Dietetics, page 447 of the March number.

As the calorie represents a definite amount of heat I do not understand the statement: "Proteids yield 4.1 calories."

*Second.* In the August number (page 913) what is meant by "Egg-albumin was not given *on account of the possibility of forming toxins.*"

Very truly yours,

MINNIE BROWN, R.N.

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["The question is a good one, for in re-reading the statement referred to, I see that the text is not plain. It might better read: 'The heat value of 1 gram (15½ grains) of each of the chief nutritive constituents of food when taken into the tissues is as follows: proteids, 4.1 calories; carbohydrates, 4.1 calories; fat, 9.3 calories.'"]

MARY C. WHEELER

The sentence, "Egg albumin was not given (to typhoid patients) on account of the possibility of forming toxins," really explains itself. Animal albuminoid substances (from milk, ice cream, meat, egg, etc.) brought in contact with the bacteria of an infected intestine (as in gastro-enteritis and in typhoid fever) not alone aid in sustaining the pathogenic organisms, but also toxalbumins form, which again may be absorbed. Such toxins for instance cause the tympanites and the parietic condition of the typhoid intestine.

New York, Sept. 12, 1908.

A. SEIBERT.]

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### DISINFECTING EXCRETA IN TYPHOID

DEAR EDITOR: I believe the best method for the sputum is the paper lined cup, using a few drops of carbolic acid to prevent any dis-

agreeable odor. It will not be any more expensive than the use of a strong disinfectant and seems a great deal safer. A solution of chloride of lime used freely over the stools, allowing them to stand a while before emptying into the closet, is a good method, but like all the disinfectants is hard on the plumbing. I hope to see some interesting discussion on this subject.

M. L. M., R.N.

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DEAR EDITOR: In the August number of the *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* is a letter regarding "The Care of the Excreta During Typhoid Fever." I recently discussed the question with a druggist who said that he considered Platt's chloride the surest, though expensive. I therefore diluted it 1-10, as I always have, and endeavored to use enough to be thorough and to not use more than necessary. I have been on duty with nurses who had not read the directions on the bottle and used it clear, nurses who were graduates from what is considered a very good training school.

I consider that expensive things, intelligently used, are not as expensive in the end as imagined. This druggist considered Kreso inexpensive and I used it as a deodorizer. I suppose it is the same as creolin, but if there is the objection which is mentioned to its use carbolic could be used as a deodorizer.

For disinfecting the clothes, the druggist considered formaldehyde the surest. It is expensive but he sent a pint bottle and I used a tablespoon to a large bucket (as we say in the south) or pail of water, which is sixteen quarts. It was used accurately and was more than enough for the disinfecting of the clothes during the entire illness.

I have noticed that oftentimes the nurse does not give thought enough to instructing members of the family that they are not to handle the clothes as they come off the bed unless they are caring for the patient during the nurse's hours of rest; that they should never touch the patient, not even to stroke his hand in affection, without thoroughly scrubbing and disinfecting the hands afterward. I do not instruct people regarding these things in the presence of the patient.

E. C. H., R.N.

#### A CRITICISM OF THE EDITOR

DEAR EDITOR: Referring to your editorial on Woman Suffrage (September number) your latest decision to "remain neutral" on "broad questions" including woman suffrage is a deep disappointment to me.

I understand that it is impossible for our magazine to do propaganda work on so-called "broad questions," but let me beg of you not to "avoid issues." Is it logical for you to interest us in such subjects distinctly outside the four walls of a sick room, as social hygiene, school hygiene, almshouse reform, child-labor laws, factory inspection, etc., if your attitude on "broad questions" is to remain neutral?

All of these subjects mentioned lead one directly to the fact that only through the ballot, in this country, can one hope for really lasting improvement. For instance, my state association appointed me to visit our county almshouse; I had the opportunity to do this thoroughly, and also to get unprejudiced, accurate information about the management of the place. I found that one could be a "lady visitor," and serve ice cream to the "inmates," give an entertainment once in a while, or send clothing, but I also found that it was quite impossible to be of any direct use in improving wretched methods and conditions, unless one were a trustee. I asked a man "who knew," if a woman could be appointed a trustee, when there was a vacancy on the board. He answered very promptly, "Oh, no." "Why?" I asked. He replied, "She has no vote." Then I reflected that in my state, Maryland, women are placed on the same plane, politically, as the half-witted "inmates," I had just seen. It gave me a bad hour, but it made me think.

You may imagine my disappointment when the "delegates representing 14,000" turned down by a large majority, in San Francisco, the obvious fact, that "until men and women have equal political rights, they cannot do their best work"—how *could* they have done it? It seemed a case of "so much the worse for the facts." My next hope was that our magazine would present the question fairly to us, at least, but alas, I find the editorial staff is in the "twilight zone" of neutrality and brushes this vital question carelessly aside.

Are we only to regard your JOURNAL in the light of a primary instructor, or can we expect real help from you after you have taught us to think? If you continue to remain neutral on the woman suffrage movement, may I suggest to you that your logical attitude must be that "a nurse's place is *inside* the sick room, not mixing up in affairs outside of her sphere."

MARY BARTLETT DIXON, R.N.,  
Johns Hopkins Hospital, 1903.

Easton, Maryland, September 10, 1908.

[The editorial policy of the JOURNAL in regard to the suffrage and all important questions is determined by the Board of Directors. The

President of the JOURNAL COMPANY is also the president of the Associated Alumnae, of which association the JOURNAL is now and has always been the official organ. The JOURNAL and the Associated Alumnae are practically one, and until such time as the Associated Alumnae are ready to endorse suffrage, the JOURNAL'S policy must remain neutral.

Personally, I regret the action of the delegates at the San Francisco meeting, and if I had been present I should have thrown the weight of my voice in favor of suffrage, but probably this would not have influenced the result of the vote, as I understand the subject was ably argued by members who support the suffrage movement.

Miss Anthony, herself, came to realize in her later years that suffrage was a matter of education, that it could not be forced upon the people until they were ready for it. I am inclined to think that the delegates at the San Francisco meeting represented either the sentiment of their home associations, or voted against it from doubt as to what that sentiment was. Nothing does the cause of suffrage greater harm than intolerant criticism which takes the form of personalities. The action taken at San Francisco has brought the matter of suffrage sharply before the nurses of the country. There are in every city opportunities for the study of this matter and I believe the time has come when our organizations may well devote careful, moderate and sane consideration to the whole broad subject.

In my judgment those nurses who were instrumental in turning the vote against the suffrage movement should give their reasons through this department of the magazine.

I do not wish to enter into any personal contention with Miss Dixon in regard to her letter of criticism of the JOURNAL'S editorial attitude more than to say that the subjects, which she refers to, of social hygiene, school hygiene, almshouse reform, child-labor laws, and factory inspection are distinctly nursing subjects, because they have to do directly with the health of the people, and because nurses are engaged professionally in these various lines of occupation, while suffrage is, in my judgment, a social subject with an indirect bearing upon nursing matters.

SOPHIA F. PALMER, R.N.

Permanent member of the Associated Alumnae, and Editor-in-Chief of the JOURNAL.]

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EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO MISS DOCK

As a nurse intensely interested in the suffrage movement, both here and in England, may I thank you for your splendid letter in the last

JOURNAL? I cannot understand the nurses' apathy, particularly when we have seen so many of our registration bills juggled with, repeatedly. But I trust that each year will bring more light to them in this respect, for we are going to have the suffrage, some day, and not by migrating to Colorado, either.

E. L. F.

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#### RECOGNITION OF THE WORK OF SOUTHERN NURSES

DEAR EDITOR: The "Experience as a Red Cross Nurse," written by Miss Beadle for the September JOURNAL, reads very well for the Red Cross nurse, but nothing is said of the noble work done by the physicians of Hattiesburg, volunteer nurses from the Kings' Daughters and the six professional nurses from New Orleans, who went to the relief of the storm victims and who cared for the sufferers during their most critical moments. In justice to them please allow me to make a little statement. The storm at Purvis, Mississippi, a small place eighteen miles distant from Hattiesburg, occurred on the afternoon of April 24. The citizens of Hattiesburg immediately went to the rescue and all victims rendered homeless or injured were brought back to the city of Hattiesburg. A call soon went in to New Orleans for six nurses, of whom I was one. The worst cases were sent to the South Mississippi Infirmary, at which place we six nurses were stationed. There we found we had plenty to do, although the patients were all very good and bore their afflictions with remarkable fortitude. All patients were convalescing at the time the Red Cross began its work.

This article is not intended as a reflection on the Red Cross work but Miss Beadle failed to state that almost two weeks transpired before a Red Cross nurse was seen in Hattiesburg, and during that length of time New Orleans nurses and Hattiesburg nurses cared for the victims and did good work.

JOSEPHINE A. EITEL.

Wilson Infirmary, Brookhaven, Miss.

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#### CARE OF THE FEET

DEAR EDITOR: I am very much interested in the letters on the care of the feet and wish to add a few suggestions. I am often reminded of a remark made by an orthopedic surgeon: "If people abused their faces as they do their feet, what awful looking people they would be." Since taking up chiropody I am surprised to find how intelligent people abuse their feet. Felix Wagner, who has written the best book on chiropody, says: "Most people think any one can cut a corn, when, as a matter of fact, no one can do it for himself properly." A few